

Utah's Division of Child and Family Services

Western Region Report

Qualitative Case Review Findings

Review Conducted

March 23-26, 2015

A Report by

The Office of Services Review, Department of Human Services

I. Introduction

The Western Region Qualitative Case Review (QCR) for FY2015 was held the week of March 23-26, 2015.

Due to caseloads shifting between the major metropolitan counties along the Wasatch Front (Weber, Davis, Salt Lake and Utah Counties), the ratio of cases has been adjusted to more accurately reflect the of proportion cases between these communities. This has resulted in an increase in the total number of cases reviewed in Western Region for FY2015 compared to prior review years. The total number of cases reviewed in FY15 was 30 cases compared to 25 cases in FY14. However, one in-home case was dropped from the review when reviewers were unable to conduct interviews with essential case stakeholders. Therefore the total number of cases reviewed was 29.

Reviewers were selected from the Office of Services Review and the Division of Child and Family Services. Reviewers also included individuals from the following organizations:

- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
- Utah Valley University
- Utah Foster Care Foundation
- Fostering Healthy Children

There were 30 cases randomly selected for the Western Region review. The case sample included 25 foster care cases and five in-home cases. Cases were selected from the American Fork, Fillmore, Heber, Nephi, Orem, Provo, Spanish Fork, and Wasatch Mental Health offices. A certified lead reviewer and shadow reviewer were assigned to each case. Information was obtained through in-depth interviews with the child (if old enough to participate), his or her parents or other guardians, foster parents (if child was placed in foster care), caseworker, teacher, therapist, other service providers, and others having a significant role in the child's life. Additionally, the child's file, including prior CPS investigations and other available records, was reviewed.

Staff from the Office of Services Review met with region staff on June 29, 2015 in an exit conference to review the results of the region's QCR. Scores and data analysis were reviewed with the region.

II. Stakeholder Observations

The results of the QCR should be considered within a broad context of local and regional interaction with community partners. Each year Office of Services Review staff members interview key community stakeholders such as foster parents, providers, representatives from the legal community, other community agencies, and DCFS staff. On March 18, 2015 OSR staff interviewed individuals and groups of DCFS staff and community partners. DCFS employees who were interviewed included the Regional Director, region administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers. Community partners interviewed included a guardian ad litem focus group, an assistant attorney general focus group, parental defense attorney, and educational representatives. Strengths and opportunities for improvement were identified by the various groups of stakeholders as described below.

Hiring Freeze

An agency-wide hiring freeze was implemented during the fall of 2014. Due to the impact the hiring freeze had in Western Region, this was the predominant discussion point in almost all stakeholder interviews. The following items pertain to the hiring freeze and are representative of both DCFS and external stakeholders' responses.

Detrimental consequences attributed to the hiring freeze:

- Most teams were down at least one worker and some teams were down more.
- Smaller offices were more impacted by the loss of staff than larger offices since larger offices were better equipped to be flexible with shifting and managing the workload.
- In some instances, the loss of support staff meant reception areas were vacant at times.
- Most supervisors were carrying caseloads to cover for vacant positions.
- There began to be a cycle that exacerbated the situation. Whenever an employee left, the workload was shifted to the remaining staff increasing the caseload of an already overloaded staff. The stress of the increasing workload contributed to more departures and a need to shift the workload to remaining staff, thus amplifying the cycle. Therefore staff and administration are concerned about the trend.
- The rate of absenteeism seemed to be increasing which was attributed to the growing workload coupled with the change that devalued hours accumulated as sick leave. Administrators recognized when staff needed a day away from work in order to recharge and were eagerly willing to authorize requests for sick days. The premise was that it was better to have staff out of the office for the day than lose the employee permanently.
- There is a concern among administrators that even when the hiring freeze is lifted that there will be a delay in getting the workforce replaced and trained to the point where there will be relief.
- Supervisors have noted that they seem to be receiving more complaints from clients as the workforce decreases and the workload increases for remaining staff. The complaints are being handled by supervisors, but there is a concern if this continues the complaints will eventually reach more formal channels such as regional and state directors, Office of Child Protection Ombudsman, Constituent Services, elected officials and so forth.

- There are a number of examples where staff is working harder than is necessary because of the hiring freeze and subsequent ballooning workload.
- Workers are reluctant to close cases fearing that another case would be assigned to fill the void.
- Cases remain open longer than is necessary because workers are unable to complete documentation necessary to close the case.
- Cases are being opened for more intensive services than is necessary such as foster care when in-home service are more appropriate or court ordered services when voluntary services are more appropriate. This is attributed to the fact that decisions are made in a frantic manner using incomplete information.
- Policy and action items which are required on all cases (in spite of low risk) take time away from high priority cases.
- It takes workers longer to return calls and respond to client requests which. A small issue can escalate into an emergency situation in the interim.
- Workers who cover vacant reception positions are diverted from case work to clerical work.
- New staff who are unfamiliar with court processes are making the job more complex than it really is. For example, staff are adding unnecessary steps to the process when filling an out-of-state travel request.

Secondary benefits attributed to the hiring freeze (assuming cost savings was the primary benefit of the hiring freeze):

- The administrative team has explored every possible way to streamline services and processes in order to increase efficiency.
- Recommendations for family preservation services have been more readily accepted by judges and legal partners.
- Recommendations for case closure are accepted at the earliest possible time.
- Regional administrators have been more active in motivating staff through recognizing extraordinary efforts of staff and by offering words of encouragement.
- There is an increase in resource sharing between staff, teams, offices and regions.
- Although there were some really experienced staff members who resigned from child welfare during the freeze, there was also some who resigned who were not as well suited for child welfare work.

Non Hiring Freeze Responses

Stakeholders offered an array of observations pertaining to other aspects of child welfare practice that were not related to the hiring freeze.

DCFS Stakeholder Interviews:

STRENGTHS:

- The assessment of the family situation has shifted from parental fitness and expanded to evaluating what informal supports are required in order to preserve the family.
- The region is monitoring the use of psychotropic medication in the foster care population. Each child is assigned a med-manager and Regional Health Care Team representative to monitor the medication.
- Staff are finding the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools helpful.
- SDM results are being used to make recommendations to the court and the courts are accepting these recommendations.
- DCFS is seeing a positive shift in the way the community is responding to the family preservation model of the HomeWorks initiative.
- Juvenile Justice Services has taken more cases lately that could be categorized as falling into the gap between DCFS and DJJS.
- There is a group of DCFS administrators that reviews all CPS supported cases. Workers see this as supportive.
- The statewide drug collection and testing contract has worked well in most of the communities in Western Region. Collection site operators have extended hours in order to accommodate clients' needs.

OPPORTUNITITES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- There is limited availability of Residential, Generalized, and Intensive Out-Patient treatment resources.
- Housing resources are limited and the process to access this resource can be difficult.
- There are concerns with the way CPS Centralized Intake is processing educational neglect reports. The primary concern pertains to whether the school district has met the statutory obligation to qualify as an educational neglect case.
- Some court probation workers are using DCFS to enforce fines and suspensions related to truancy and educational neglect issues.
- Non-offending, non-custodial parents are being drawn into participating in services when there was no prior issue with this parent.
- Some workers feel they have no voice in court.
- The frequency of drug testing is a source of contention between courts and the division; the courts are expecting more frequent testing while the DCFS is trying to limit the number of tests per month as a budgetary consideration.
- SDM tools are being used regularly by DCFS staff but fidelity to the SDM standards is lax.
- There is a perception that some courts are keeping cases open in order to secure resources for youth at the time of emancipation.
- Some foster parents are paying for services for youth out of their own pocket because it is easier.
- There are some gaps in the array of services for particular needs. For example, services to children in certain age ranges or services to children with severe behavioral needs.

SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN:

- There is a regional funding committee. There are mixed opinions regarding the helpfulness of the committee. Some have reported this committee can be very helpful in advocating for resources, while others believe the committee is a barrier to accessing resources.
- Courts are ordering more frequent parent/child visitation which is good for clients but DCFS has to shoulder the burden of supervising the increased visits. Courts are decreasing the rate at which third-party supervised visits are permitted.
- The movement towards more preventative services has increased the number of families being served through home-based services; however, many of these cases result in a removal a few months later.
- Transition to Adult Living cases tend to stay open longer; however this is occurring in order to develop a better network of informal supports for the youth.
- Peer parenting services is one of the preferred service options for staff and families; however, access to the resource is difficult due to the narrow qualification requirements or limited funding of the service.
- Drug treatment programs are over capacity leading to long waiting lists. As an alternative some clients are enrolling in drug classes. These classes are instructional but have no treatment component. When clients complete these classes, courts are closing the case. Some workers are concerned about the likelihood of relapse for these clients.
- Some youth under 12 years of age are being referred to family therapy and limited individual therapy based on the premise that they are too young to benefit from individual therapy.

INFORMATION:

- After hours CPS workers seem to be getting more calls because of the SDM safety plan.
- The region has been altering the approach for recommending cases for closure. Cases will now be recommended for closure when the family attains “good enough” status rather than “perfect.”
- HomeWorks initiative will be coming to the region in late 2015. The region is looking forward to the launch of the initiative and has been preparing community partners for the arrival. However, there is also some trepidation regarding whether there will be sufficient resources in the community to support the initiative. Another concern for the region pertains to whether they will be able to implement the initiative with the same commitment of time and resources Northern Region was able to generate.

From Community Partner Stakeholder Interviews:

STRENGTHS:

- Workers conduct themselves in a professional manner and do a great job.

- Staff provides court documents to partners in a timely manner.
- Team meetings have not been affected by the workload issues.
- Parental Defense Attorneys attend team meetings whenever possible. Workers do a good job of notifying these attorneys about meetings. Workers provide information to the attorney when the attorney is unable to attend the meeting.
- CPS staff generally does a good job of assessing risk when determining family preservation or removal.
- There is an excellent working relationship between the division and all the different legal partners (attorney general, guardian ad litem, and parental defense attorneys).
- The SDM tools seem to influence decisions made in the court.
- Workers' efforts to locate missing parents are sufficient.
- Workers do a good job of tracking school issues.
- It is evident from the perspective outside of DCFS that the agency is striving to do more prevention work such as family preservation and voluntary services.
- The working relationship between DCFS workers and the Alpine School District is good.
- Alpine School District has DCFS and DJJS youth attending mainstream classes and blending in with the entire student body. Rarely do these students require any extra attention by the school administration.
- Whenever a student is enrolled in the district and there are extraordinary supervision requirements for the school to implement, there is a great deal of coordination between the school and DCFS.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Some community partners question whether the drug testing results can be trusted.
- Services during the first 12 months of a foster care case could be intensified.
- Some judges want to keep cases open longer than what most of the rest of the legal team recommends.
- It seems to some that the decisions coming from the Regional Funding Screening Committee to approve expenditures are based on dollars and not needs.
- The GAL is not always informed about critical case events, most notably, placement changes and upcoming adoptions.
- Family Team Meetings are scheduled with little consideration for the GALs' schedule. Notice of team meetings or changes of the meeting time tend to be last minute.
- Fictive Kin licensing is taking longer than some would like.
- The GAL does not always see the home study of the kin caregiver.
- The GAL does not see some of the other formal assessments. Workers seem to be unaware of what documents they can share with the GAL.
- There are insufficient services to English Language Learner clients.
- Some workers can get fixated on the issues that brought the child to the attention of DCFS and the worker fails to recognize the situation. For example, a child is removed due to low birth weight but the weight of the child remains unchanged in foster care, which might suggest that the condition is physiological and not environmental.
- There are delays in getting families started in services, particularly county-based services.

- There are fewer service options in the rural areas of the region than in the metro areas of the region.
- A case where paternity is uncertain tends to remain uncertain throughout the case.
- Schools are not always notified when a foster child is enrolled. In some instances the student will just “show up” while others are discovered to be foster children long after the student has been attending.
- Teachers are willing to attend team meetings if given proper notification. Schools are willing to host meetings and this would increase the teacher’s ability to attend the meeting.
- Education administrators feel that the schools are more forthcoming and willing to share information than the child welfare workforce.
- When a foster child changes placements during the middle of the quarter, credits tend to be lost due to the timing of the change.
- Transitions between schools can be a time when records and credits are lost. This can be minimized when the worker coordinates closely with the school.
- Schools could use more information when a student is reunified.
- Schools have noted that students tend to perform much better while in foster care but less well after reunification. This is discouraging to the school when the student is making progress towards graduation then suddenly tapers off.

SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN:

- DCFS does a great job of notifying partners of 24-hour meetings following CPS removals. However, in some parts of the region, it seems some of the important decision makers are not attending regularly.
- Some judges are keeping cases open in order for the youth to access resources; however, there has been greater awareness that resources can be accessed regardless of case closure.
- In the past year, court reports were chronically late. This was addressed and the performance has improved.
- Family team meetings appear to be frequently occurring in conjunction with court hearings.
- Many of the courtrooms are now staffed with the same legal team (judge, AAG, and GAL). In many ways this promotes effectiveness and improved coordination but also leads to a sense that the legal team is stacked against the parent.
- Workers are involving parents in the development of the plan but only superficially. Parents do not really understand the situation or the process but are present when the plan is discussed. Parents are even less involved when it comes time to update the plan.
- Efforts to locate missing parents fluctuate depending on the judge. Some judges make this a priority while others attend to this as required.

Status, System Performance, Analysis, and Trends

The QCR findings are presented in graphic form to help quantify the observations of the qualitative review. Graphs show a comparison of scores for past reviews with the current review. The charts of the two broad domains of Child and Family Status and System Performance show the percentage of cases in which the key indicators were judged to be “acceptable.” A six-point rating scale is used to determine whether or not an indicator is judged to be acceptable. Reviewers scored each of the cases reviewed using this rating scale. The range of ratings is as follows:

- 1: Completely Unacceptable
- 2: Substantially Unacceptable
- 3: Partially Unacceptable
- 4: Minimally Acceptable
- 5: Substantially Acceptable
- 6: Optimal Status/Performance

Child and Family Status and System Performance are evaluated using 15 key indicators. Graphs presenting the overall scores for each domain are presented below. They are followed by graphs showing the distribution of scores for each indicator within each of the two domains.

Child and Family Status Indicators

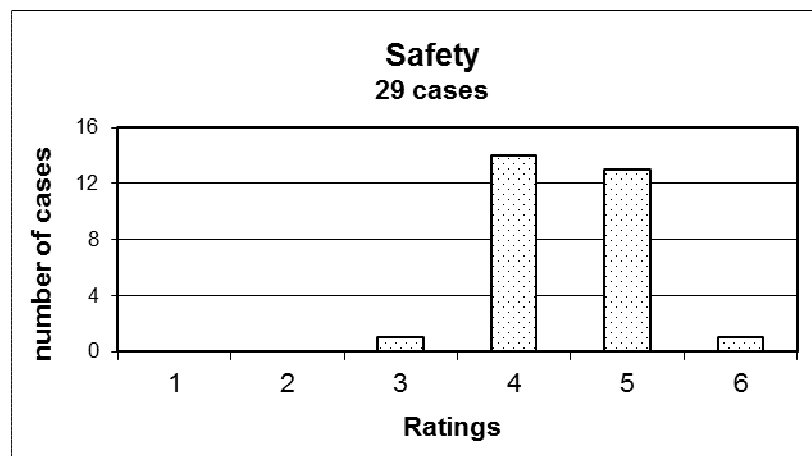
Overall Status

Western Child Status	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	Standard: 70% on all indicators except Safety, which is 85%	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15 current scores
			Standard: Criteria 85% on overall score					
Safety	28	1	97%	100%	92%	92%	96%	97%
Child Safe from Others	28	1	97%	NA	96%	100%	100%	97%
Child Risk to Self	29	0	100%	NA	96%	92%	96%	100%
Stability	25	4	86%	75%	83%	71%	76%	86%
Prospect for Permanence	16	13	55%	63%	67%	46%	68%	55%
Health/Physical Well-being	29	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Emot./Behavioral Well-being	27	2	93%	96%	92%	92%	88%	93%
Learning	27	2	93%	92%	88%	88%	88%	93%
Family Connections	17	4	81%	NA	94%	94%	77%	81%
Satisfaction	23	6	79%	88%	96%	92%	84%	79%
Overall Score	26	3	90%	100%	92%	88%	96%	90%
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%								

Safety

Summative Questions: Is the child safe from threats of harm in his/her daily living, learning, working and recreational environments? Are others in the child's daily environments safe from the child? Does the child avoid self-endangerment and refrain from using behaviors that may put self and others at risk of harm?

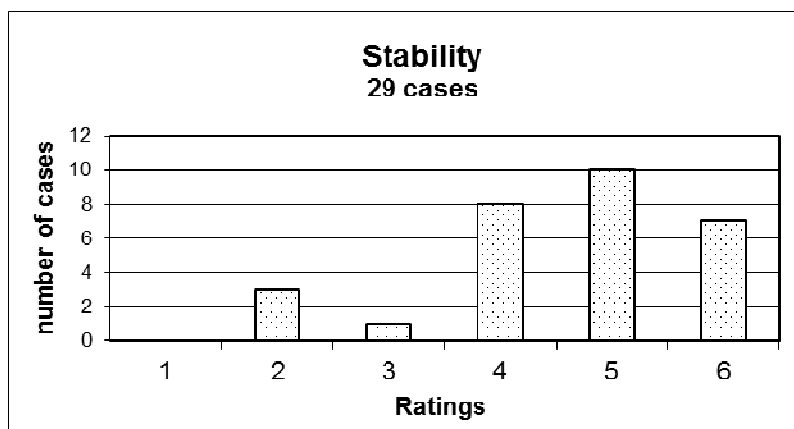
Findings: 97% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is slightly higher than last year's score. This indicator measures both the Child's Safety from Others and the Child's Risk to Self or Others. Out of the 29 cases reviewed, only one had an unacceptable score on Safety, and that was on Child's Risk to Self or Others.



Stability

Summative Questions: Has the child's placement setting been consistent and stable? Are the child's daily living and learning arrangements stable and free from risk of disruption? If not, are appropriate services being provided to achieve stability and reduce the probability of disruption?

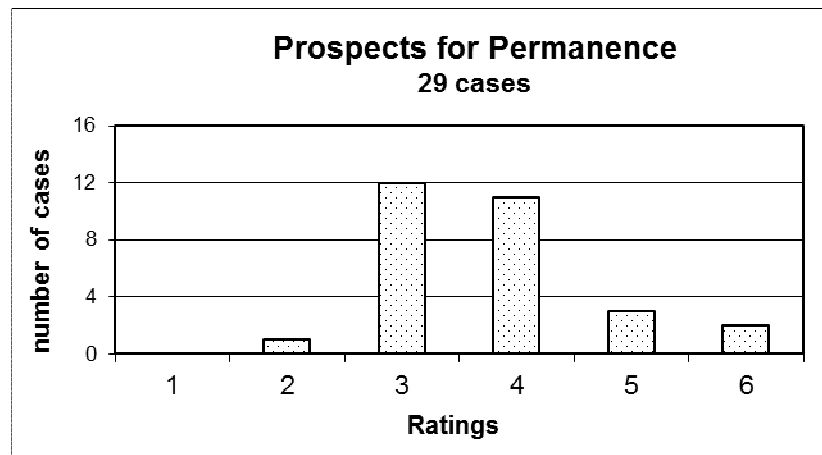
Findings: 86% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is an increase from last year's score of 76%.



Prospects for Permanence

Summative Questions: Is the child living with caregivers that the child, caregivers, and other stakeholders believe will endure until the child becomes independent? If not, is a permanency plan presently being implemented on a timely basis that will ensure that the child will live in enduring relationships that provide a sense of family, stability, and belonging?

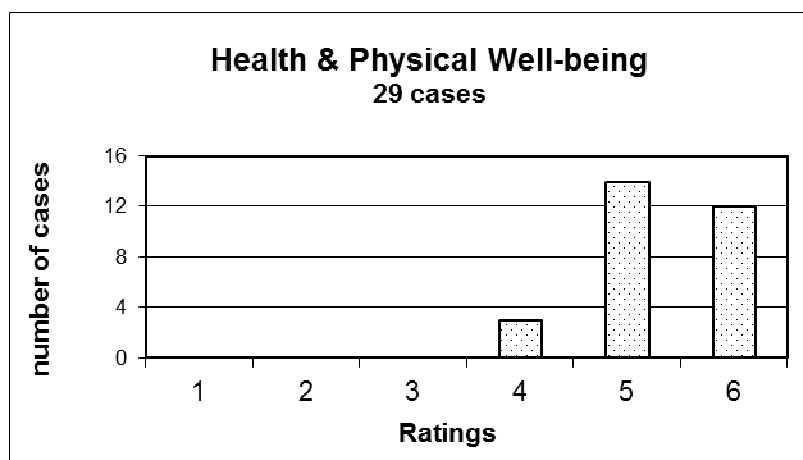
Findings: 55% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 68%.



Health/Physical Well-Being

Summative Questions: Is the child in good health? Are the child's basic physical needs being met? Does the child have health care services, as needed?

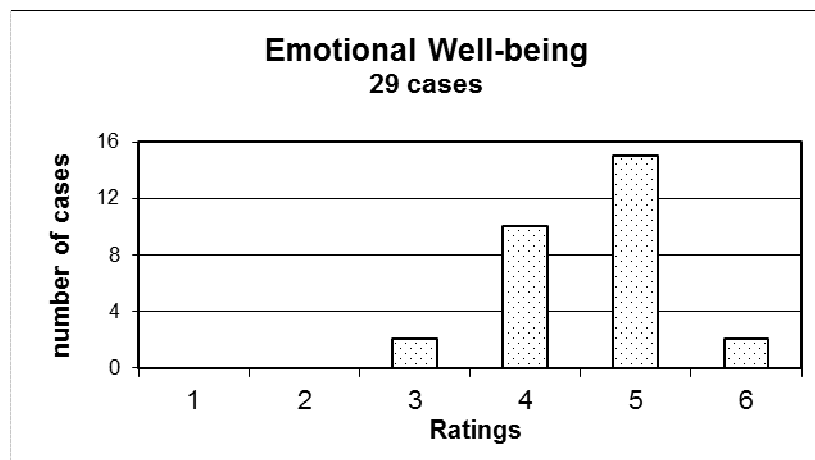
Findings: 100% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This score has been 100% for several consecutive years.



Emotional/Behavioral Well-Being

Summative Questions: Is the child doing well emotionally and behaviorally? If not, is the child making reasonable progress toward stable and adequate functioning, emotionally and behaviorally, at home and school?

Findings: 93% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is an increase from last year's score of 88%. Not only did more cases score in the acceptable range of 4-6 but the most frequent rating was 5 in comparison to last year when the most frequent rating was 4.

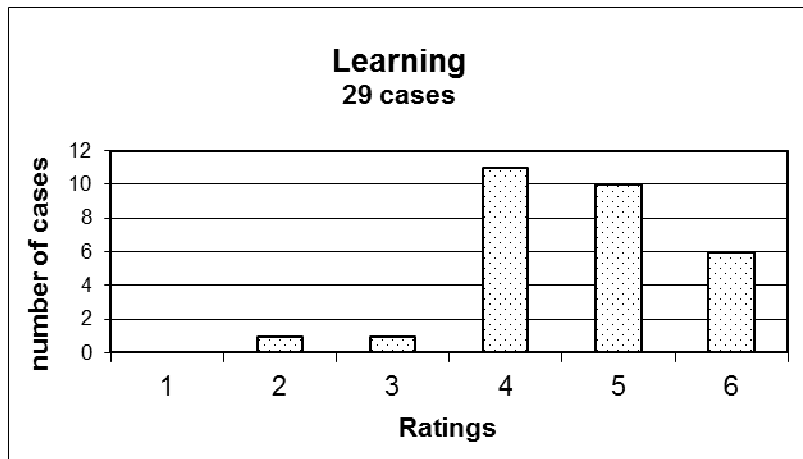


Learning Progress

Summative Question: (For children age five and older.) Is the child learning, progressing and gaining essential functional capabilities at a rate commensurate with his/her age and ability?

Note: There is a supplementary scale used with children under the age of five that puts greater emphasis on developmental progress. Scores from the two scales are combined for this report.

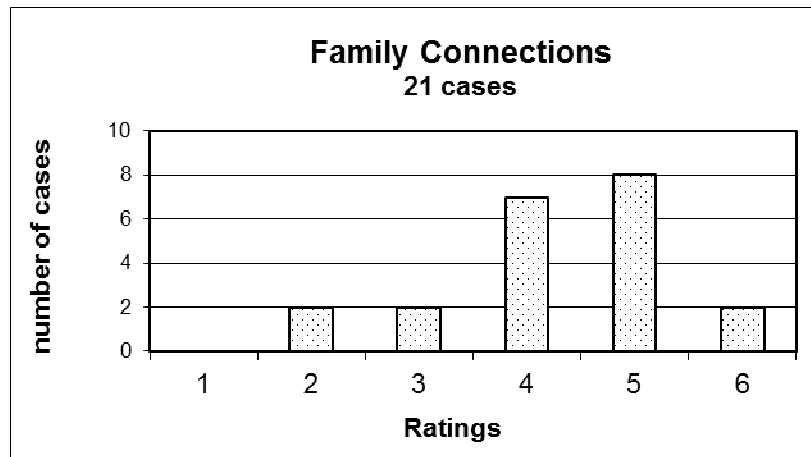
Findings: 93% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is an increase from last year's score of 88%.



Family Connections

Summative Question: While the child and family are living apart, are family relationships and connections being maintained through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies, unless compelling reasons exist for keeping them apart?

Findings: This indicator measures whether or not the relationship between the child and the mother, father, siblings, and other important family members is being maintained while the child is in foster care. 81% of the cases scored acceptable on Overall Family Connections. This is an improvement from last year's score of 77%. The scores ranged from 78% for Fathers to 53% for Mothers.



Western-Family Connections			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY15 Current Scores
Overall Connections	17	4	81%
Siblings	2	1	67%
Mother	8	7	53%
Father	14	4	78%
Other	2	1	67%

Satisfaction

Summative Question: Are the child, parent/guardian, and substitute caregiver satisfied with the supports and services they are receiving?

Findings: 79% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6) on the overall Satisfaction score. This is a decline from last year's score of 84%. Reviewers rated the satisfaction of Children, Mothers, Fathers, and Caregivers. Scores for all individual parties ranged from 100% for Caregivers to 53% for Mothers.

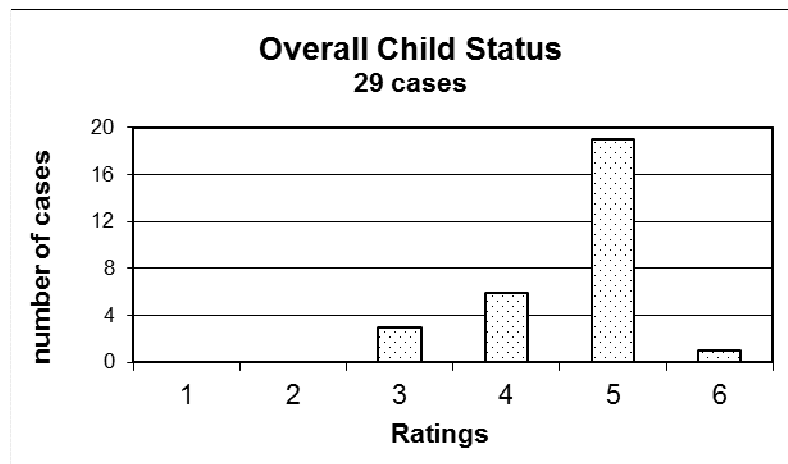


Satisfaction			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY15 Current Scores
Satisfaction	23	6	79%
Child	16	2	89%
Mother	9	8	53%
Father	8	6	57%
Caregiver	20	0	100%

Overall Child and Family Status

Summative Questions: Based on the Qualitative Case Review scores determined for the Child and Family Status indicators, how well are this child and family presently doing? A special scoring procedure is used to determine Overall Child and Family Status using the 6-point rating scale. In addition to scoring a 4 with this procedure, four of the first seven status indicators (minus Satisfaction) must score acceptable in order for the Overall Score to be acceptable. A unique condition affects the rating of Overall Child and Family status in every case: The Safety indicator always acts as a “trump” so that the Overall Child and Family status rating cannot be acceptable unless the Safety indicator is also acceptable.

Findings: 90% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). The overall Child and Family Status score decreased from last year’s score of 96% but remained well above the 85% standard.



System Performance Indicators

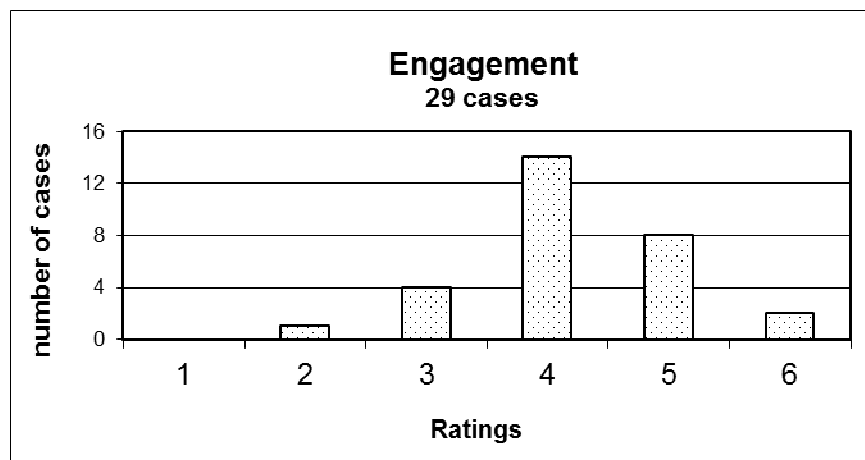
Overall System

Western System Performance	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	Standard: 70% on all indicators	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15 current scores
			Standard: 85% on overall score					
Engagement	24	5	83%	75%	88%	79%	88%	83%
Teaming	23	6	79%	67%	67%	29%	80%	79%
Assessment	21	8	72%	75%	71%	71%	76%	72%
Long-term View	17	12	59%	58%	54%	42%	60%	59%
Child & Family Plan	16	13	55%	38%	58%	46%	84%	55%
Intervention Adequacy	24	5	83%	88%	79%	75%	88%	83%
Tracking & Adapting	24	5	83%	75%	92%	75%	88%	83%
Overall Score	23	6	79%	83%	79%	67%	80%	79%
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%								

Child and Family Engagement

Summative Questions: Has the agency made concerted efforts to actively involve parents and children in the service process and in making decisions about the child and family? To what extent has the agency used rapport building strategies, including special accommodations, to engage the family?

Findings: 83% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 88% but above standard. Separate scores were given for Child, Mother, Father and Other. An overall score was then selected by the reviewer. Scores for the various groups ranged from a high of 92% for Children to 50% for Others.

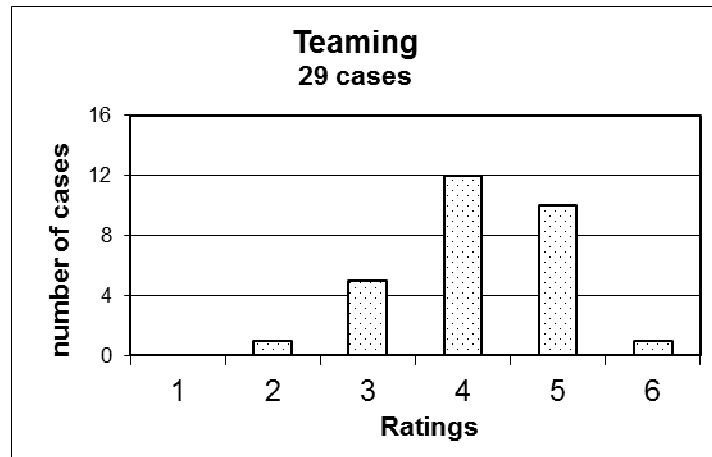


Western-Engagement			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY15 Current Scores
Engagement	24	5	83%
Child	23	2	92%
Mother	19	4	83%
Father	12	8	60%
Other	2	2	50%

Child and Family Teaming

Summative Questions: Do the child, family, and service providers function as a team? Do the actions of the team reflect a pattern of effective teamwork and collaboration that benefits the child and family? Is there effective coordination in the provision of services across all providers?

Findings: 79% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is comparable to last year's score of 80%.



Child and Family Assessment

Summative Questions: Are the current, obvious and substantial strengths and needs of the child and family identified through existing assessments, both formal and informal, so that all interveners collectively have a “big picture” understanding of the child and family? Do the assessments help the team draw conclusions on how to provide effective services to meet the child’s needs for enduring permanency, safety, and well-being? Are the critical underlying issues identified that must be resolved for the child to live safely with his/her family independent of agency supervision or to obtain an independent and enduring home?

Findings: 72% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a slight decrease from last year’s score of 76% but is above the 70% standard. Individual scores were given for this indicator. The highest score was the Caregiver score at 100%. The Child’s score was somewhat lower at 90%. Mothers and Fathers scored lower at 71% each.

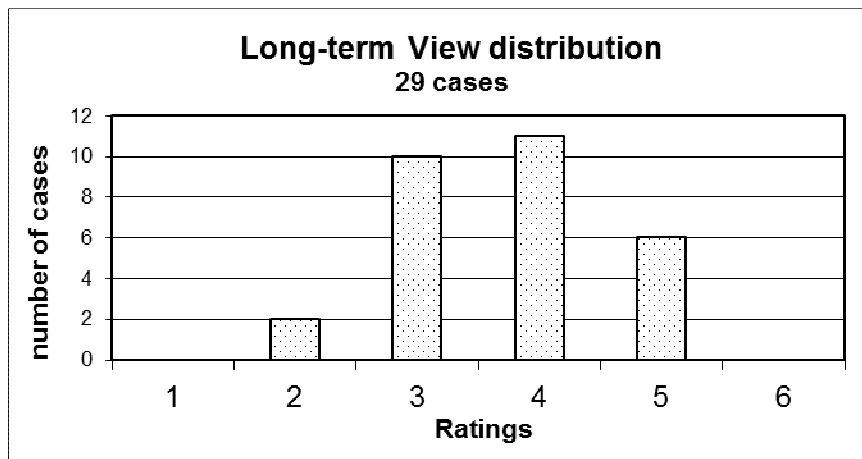


Western-Assessment			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY15 Current Scores
Assessment	21	8	72%
Child	26	3	90%
Mother	17	7	71%
Father	15	6	71%
Caregiver	18	18	100%

Long-Term View

Summative Questions: Is there a path that will lead the family and/or child toward achieving enduring safety and permanency without DCFS interventions? Is it realistic and achievable? Does the team, particularly the child/family, understand the path and destination? Does the path provide steps and address the next major transition(s) toward achieving enduring safety and permanence independent of DCFS interventions?

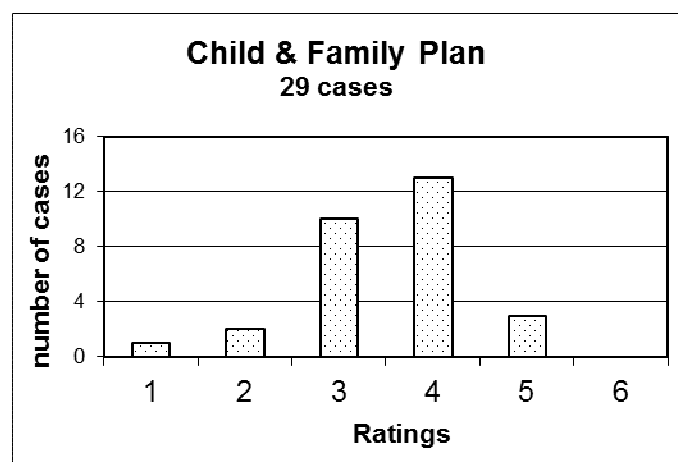
Findings: 59% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is essentially the same as last year's score of 60%. The score is below the Indicator Performance Standard of 70%.



Child and Family Plan

Summative Questions: Is the Child and Family Plan individualized and relevant to needs and goals? Are supports, services and interventions assembled into a holistic and coherent service process that provides a mix of elements uniquely matched to the child/family's situation and preferences? Does the combination of supports and services fit the child and family's situation so as to maximize potential results and minimize conflicting strategies and inconveniences?

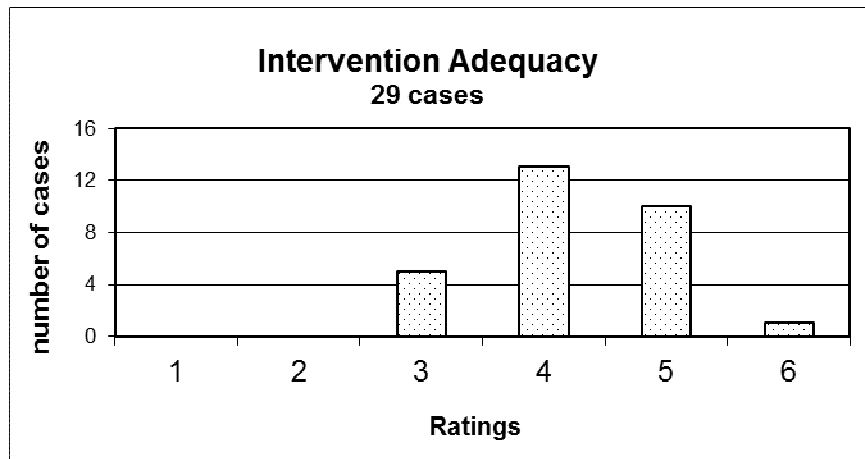
Findings: 55% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a substantial drop from last year's score of 84%. This score is below the Indicator Performance Standard of 70%.



Intervention Adequacy

Summative Questions: To what degree are the planned interventions, services, and supports being provided to the child and family of sufficient power (precision, intensity, duration, fidelity, and consistency) and beneficial effect to produce results that would enable the child and family to live safely and independent from DCFS?

Findings: 83% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a slight decrease from last year's score of 88%. This indicator was scored separately for Child, Mother, Father, and Caregiver. The scores ranged from 94% for Caregivers to 64% for Mothers and Fathers.

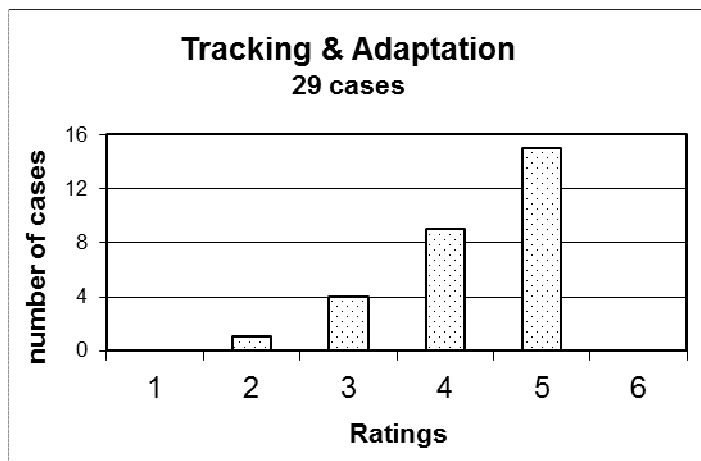


Western-Intervention Adequacy			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY15 Current Scores
Intervention Adequacy	24	5	83%
Child	25	4	86%
Mother	9	5	64%
Father	7	4	64%
Caregiver	15	1	94%

Tracking and Adaptation

Summative Questions: Are the child and family status, service process, and progress routinely monitored and evaluated by the team? Are services modified to respond to the changing needs of the child and family and to apply knowledge gained about service efforts and results to create a self-correcting service process?

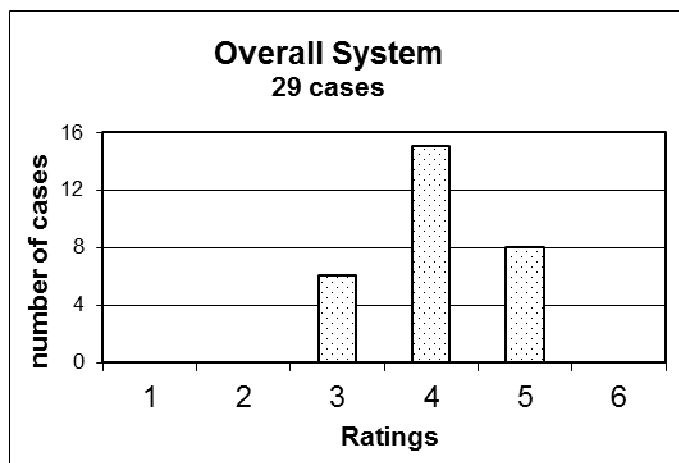
Findings: 83% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a slight decrease from last year's score of 88%.



Overall System Performance

Summative Questions: Based on the Qualitative Case Review scores determined for System Performance indicators, how well is the service system functioning for this child now? A special scoring procedure is used to determine Overall System Performance using the 6-point rating scale. In addition to scoring a 4 with this procedure, four of the seven system performance indicators must score acceptable in order for the overall score to be acceptable.

Findings: 79% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is essentially the same as last year's score of 80% and just below the System Performance Standard of 85%.



Outcome Matrix

The display below presents a matrix analysis of the service testing results during the current QCR. Each of the cells in the matrix shows the percent of children and families experiencing one of four possible outcomes:

- Outcome 1: child and family status acceptable, system performance acceptable
- Outcome 2: child and family status unacceptable, system performance acceptable
- Outcome 3: child and family status acceptable, system performance unacceptable
- Outcome 4: child and family status unacceptable, system performance unacceptable

The desired result is to have as many children and families in Outcome 1 as possible and as few in Outcome 4 as possible. It is fortunate that some children and families do well in spite of unacceptable system performance (Outcome 3). Experience suggests that these are most often either unusually resilient or resourceful children and families, or children and families who have some “champion” or advocate who protects them from the shortcomings of the system. Unfortunately, there may also be some children and families who, in spite of good system performance, do not do well (these children and families would fall in Outcome 2).

The outcome matrix for children and families reviewed during the Western Region review indicates that 79% of the cases had acceptable ratings on both Child Status and System Performance. There were three cases that rated unacceptable on both Child Status and System Performance.

	Favorable Status of Child Outcome 1	Unfavorable Status of Child Outcome 2	
Acceptable System Performance	Good status for the child, agency services presently acceptable. n= 23 79%	Poor status for the child, agency services minimally acceptable but limited in reach or efficacy. n= 0 0%	79%
Unacceptable System Performance	Outcome 3 Good status for the child, agency Mixed or presently unacceptable. n= 3 10%	Outcome 4 Poor status for the child, agency presently unacceptable. n= 3 10%	21%
	90%	10%	100%

V. Analysis of the Data

RESULTS BY CASE TYPE

The following tables compare how the different Case Types performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. Indicators scores which fall below the indicator performance standard of 70% are highlighted in yellow. There were no family preservation (PFP/PFR) or voluntary cases (PSC) in the sample. There were 25 Foster Care cases and four In-home cases. Both Foster Care (80%) and In-home (75%) cases scored below the Overall Child Status Standard of 85%. Foster Care cases failed to achieve the Indicator Performance Standard of 70% on Prospects for Permanence, Long-term View and Child and Family Plan.

FY15 Case Type	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Foster Care SCF	25	96%	48%	88%	80%	80%	72%	56%	52%	84%	84%	80%
In-Home PSS	4	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%

Collection of demographic information regarding cases included in the case sample includes the question, “Did the child come into services due to delinquency instead of abuse and neglect?” Six of the 29 cases (20%) in the sample are reported to have entered services due to delinquency rather than abuse or neglect. The following table shows that Non-delinquency cases scored better than Delinquency cases particularly in the Overall System Performance score. Non-delinquency cases were also more likely to be stable and have better prospects for permanence than Delinquency cases.

Case Type	# in Sample	Stability	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Overall System Performance
Delinquency	6	67%	33%	67%	17%
Non-Delinquency	23	91%	61%	96%	96%

RESULTS BY PERMANENCY GOAL

The following table compares how the different Permanency Goals performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. In most of these goal types the sample is small and therefore each case has more significant impact on the score and may not indicate a pattern of practice. Most noteworthy is that the performance measures on Long-term View and Prospects for Permanence are comparable. Long-term View and Child and Family Plan both fall below the Indicator Performance Standard of 70% and require a Program Improvement Plan (PIP). It is also noteworthy that cases with a goal type of Reunification were the highest performing goal type in the Child and Family Plan Indicator followed by the goal type of Remain Home. This suggests that the plans supporting family preservation are much more likely to be adequate compared to plans for the achievement of the alternative permanency outcomes of Adoption, Guardianship or Individualized Permanency.

FY15 Permanency Goal	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Adoption	3	67%	100%	67%	100%	33%	67%	100%	0%	100%	67%	67%
Guardianship (Non-Rel)	2	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	100%	100%
Guardianship (Rel)	2	100%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	0%	0%	50%	50%	50%
Individualized Perm.	6	100%	67%	83%	83%	83%	67%	67%	33%	83%	83%	67%
Remain Home	4	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
Reunification	12	100%	25%	100%	75%	92%	75%	50%	83%	83%	92%	92%

RESULTS BY CASEWORKER DEMOGRAPHICS

Caseload

The following table compares how caseload affected some key child status and core system performance indicators. Caseloads in the sample were divided into two categories: caseloads of 16 cases or less and caseloads of 17 cases or more. Over the past three years the region has experienced extreme fluctuation in the number of workers carrying 17 or more cases. In FY13, almost half of the caseworkers (46%) had caseloads of 17 cases or more (11 of 24 workers). In FY14, only one of the 25 workers (4%) had a high caseload. In this year's review slightly less than half (41%) of the workers had a caseload of 17 or more cases (12 of 29).

FY15 Caseload Size	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
16 cases or less	17	94%	59%	82%	76%	76%	65%	71%	53%	82%	82%	76%
17 cases or more	12	100%	50%	100%	92%	83%	83%	42%	58%	83%	83%	83%

Worker Experience

The following table compares how Length of Employment as a caseworker impacts performance. Only three workers had less than a year of experience. What is noteworthy is that almost all ranges for years of experience performed similarly in Long-term View and Child and Family Plan. This suggests that any focus on these two areas of practice should not be confined to any particular cohort of employee regardless of years of experience.

FY15 Length of Employment in Current Position	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Less than 12 months	4	100%	25%	75%	50%	50%	75%	50%	50%	75%	75%	100%
12 to 24 months	6	100%	67%	100%	100%	100%	83%	50%	67%	83%	83%	83%
24 to 36 months	6	100%	83%	100%	100%	100%	83%	83%	83%	100%	100%	100%
36 to 48 months	4	100%	75%	100%	50%	50%	25%	50%	25%	50%	75%	50%
48 to 60 months	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%
60 to 72 months	0			#DIV/0!								#DIV/0!
More than 72 months	8	88%	25%	75%	88%	75%	75%	50%	50%	88%	75%	75%

RESULTS BY OFFICE

The following table compares how offices within the region performed on some key child status and system performance indicators. Cases from eight offices in the Western Region were selected as part of the sample. Smaller offices (American Fork, Fillmore, Heber, and Nephi) all tended to perform better than the metropolitan offices (Orem, Provo, Spanish Fork and Wasatch). This is most evident when comparing the Overall Child Status and Overall System Performance scores of the smaller offices (100%) to the larger offices where all but one was less than 100%. Indicator scores in the smaller offices tended to be higher than the Indicator scores of the larger offices. Also noteworthy is that 75% (22 of the 29) of the cases in the review were from the metropolitan or larger offices. Therefore any plan to address practice improvement would focus on these offices.

FY15 Office	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
American Fork	3	100%	67%	100%	100%	33%	100%	100%	33%	100%	100%	100%
Delta	0			NA								NA
Fillmore	1	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Heber	2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Nephi	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Orem	8	100%	38%	88%	88%	88%	88%	50%	50%	88%	88%	88%
Provo	7	86%	86%	86%	100%	71%	57%	57%	43%	71%	71%	57%
Spanish Fork	6	100%	17%	83%	67%	100%	50%	50%	83%	67%	83%	83%
Wasatch Mental Health	1	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%

SYSTEM INDICATORS

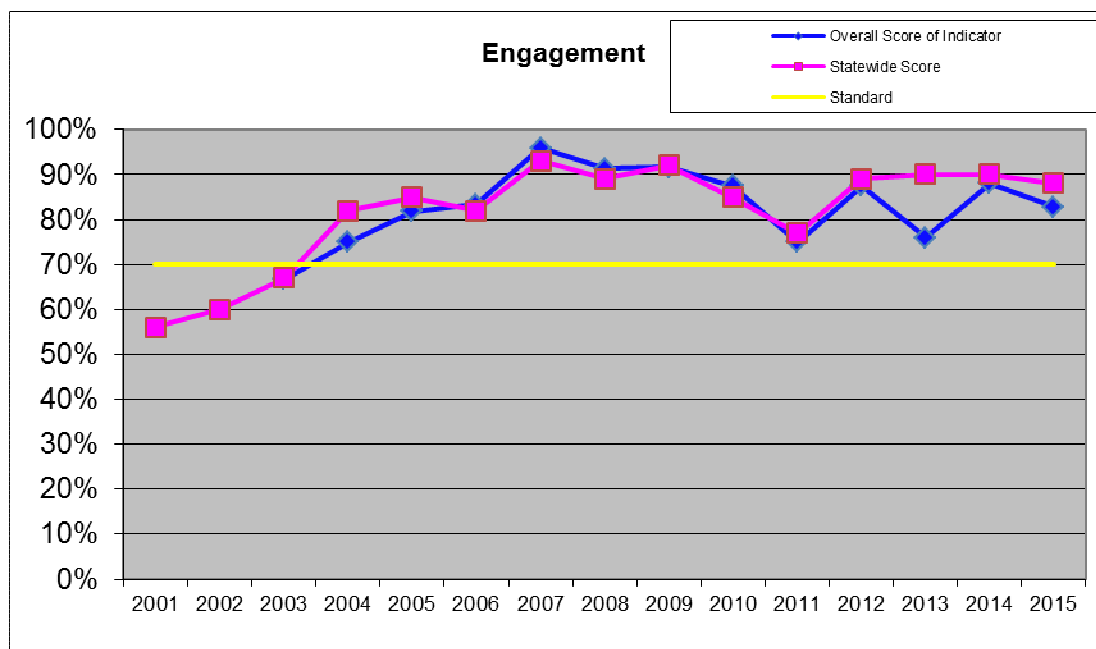
Below is data for all system indicators over the last 15 years showing how the ratings of 1 (completely unacceptable), 2 (substantially unacceptable), 3 (partially unacceptable), 4 (minimally acceptable), 5 (substantially acceptable) and 6 (optimal) are trending within each indicator. The table for each indicator in the section below shows an average and percentage score for that indicator. The line graph represents the percentage of the indicator that scored within the acceptable range. The ideal trend would be to see an increase in the average score of the indicator along with an increase in the percentage score.

Western region's score on Overall System Performance had declined to 67% in FY13, but the scores have been steady at 80% for last year and 79% for this year. However, the scores are below the Overall System Performance Standard of 85%.

Child and Family Engagement

Both the average and the percentage scores on Engagement declined this year.

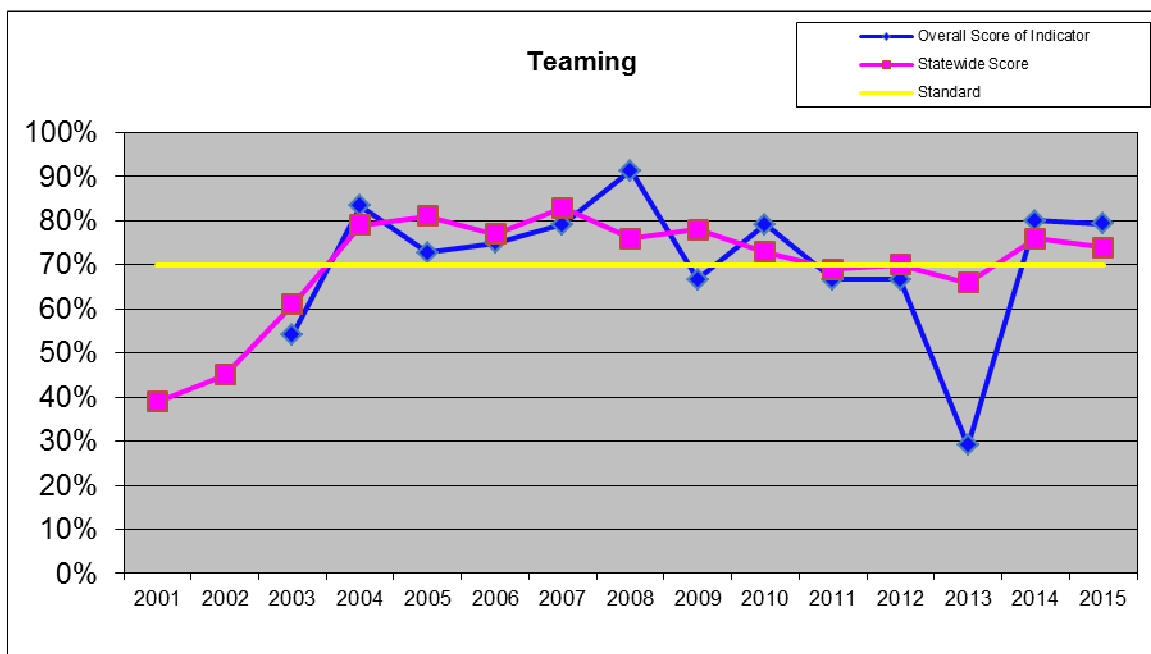
Engagement															
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average Score of Indicator			3.75	4.17	4.36	4.42	4.46	4.43	4.58	4.58	4.08	4.57	4.47	4.70	4.21
Overall Score of Indicator			67%	75%	82%	83%	96%	91%	92%	88%	75%	88%	76%	88%	83%
Statewide Score	56%	60%	67%	82%	85%	82%	93%	89%	92%	85%	77%	89%	90%	90%	88%



Child and Family Team and Coordination

The Teaming score average increased slightly this year while the percentage dropped slightly. The region percentage score is above the state percentage score for the teaming indicator.

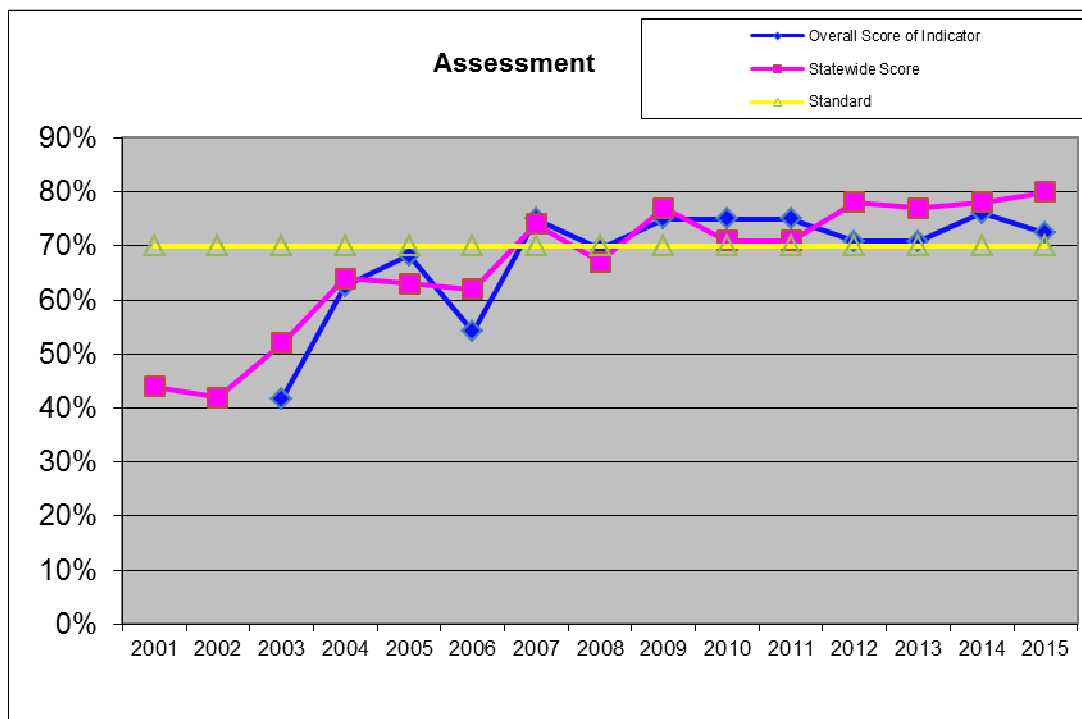
Teaming															
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average Score of Indicator			3.67	4.08	4.18	4.17	4.08	4.39	4.08	4.33	4.00	4.00	3.29	4.16	4.17
Overall Score of Indicator			54%	83%	73%	75%	79%	91%	67%	79%	67%	67%	29%	80%	79%
Statewide Score	39%	45%	61%	79%	81%	77%	83%	76%	78%	73%	69%	70%	66%	76%	74%



Child and Family Assessment

The score on Assessment has been consistent, ranging from 70-75% over the past several years. The average score is the 15-year high score.

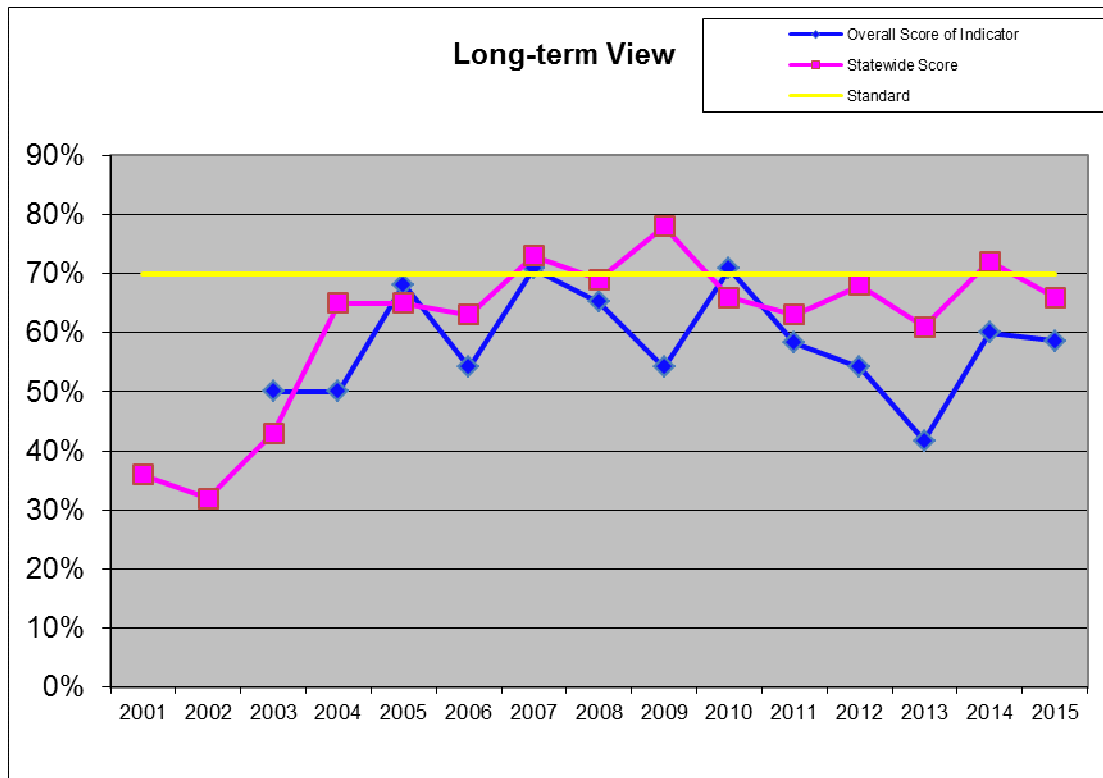
Assessment															
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average Score of Indicator			3.33	3.79	3.82	3.83	3.96	3.87	3.92	4.00	4.04	3.83	3.92	4.08	4.60
Overall Score of Indicator			42%	63%	68%	54%	75%	70%	75%	75%	75%	71%	71%	76%	72%
Statewide Score	44%	42%	52%	64%	63%	62%	74%	67%	77%	71%	71%	78%	77%	78%	80%



Long-Term View

Long-term View percentage score remained similar to last year's score but the average score dropped slightly from last year's score and is below the statewide score for this indicator.

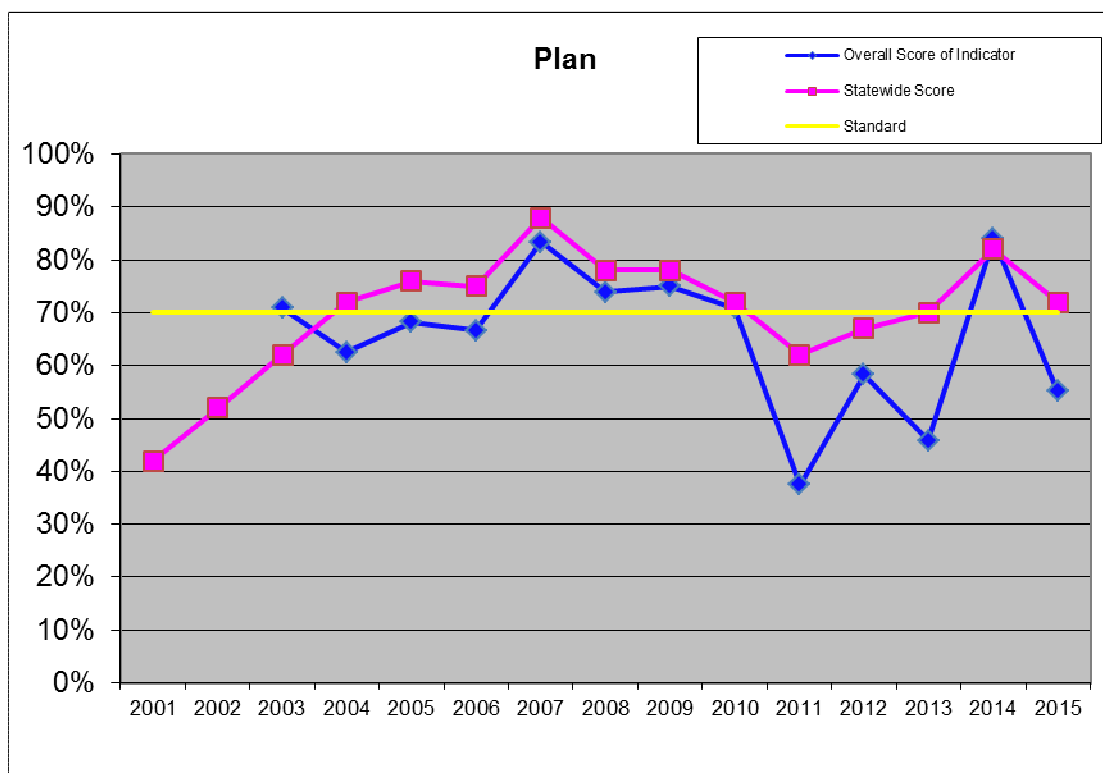
Long-Term View															
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average Score of Indicator			3.38	3.58	3.91	3.71	3.92	3.91	3.54	3.88	3.63	3.67	3.54	3.84	3.72
Overall Score of Indicator			50%	50%	68%	54%	71%	65%	54%	71%	58%	54%	42%	60%	59%
Statewide Score	36%	32%	43%	65%	65%	63%	73%	69%	78%	66%	63%	68%	61%	72%	66%



Child and Family Plan

The percentage score for Child and Family Plan dropped to 55% after making a significant improvement in FY14. The average score also dropped back to where it was in FY13. The region is below the statewide score for Child and Family Plan.

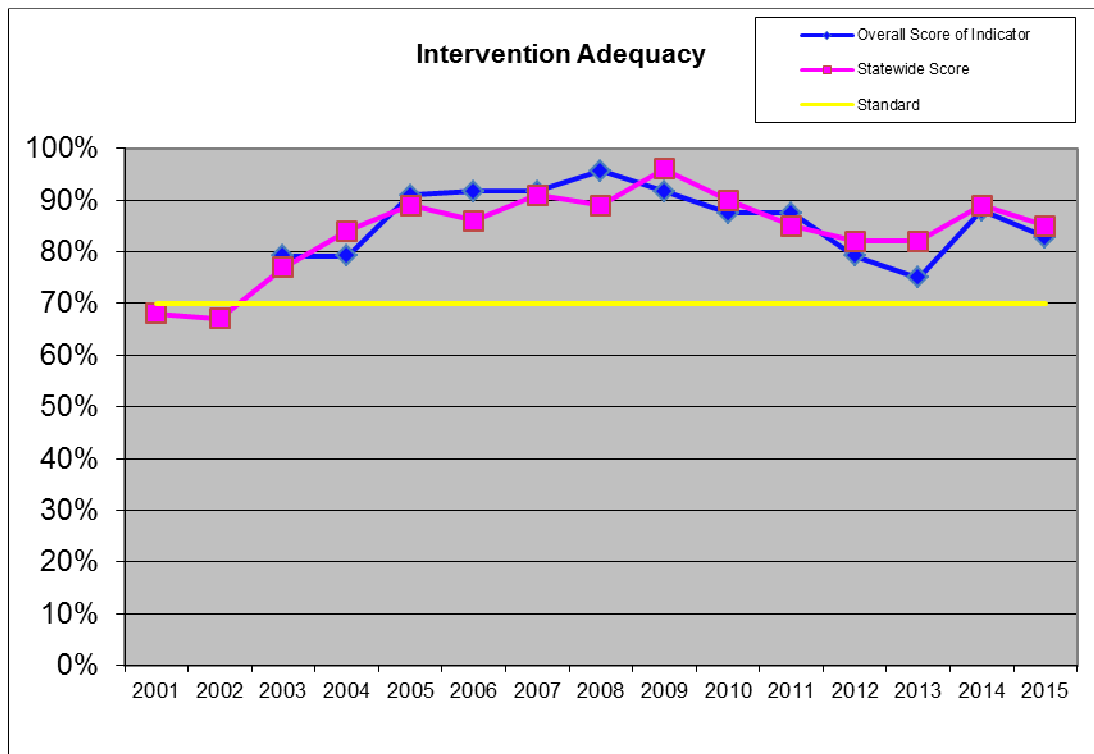
Child and Family Plan															
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average Score of Indicator			3.83	3.83	4.09	3.96	4.13	4.00	3.96	3.83	3.33	3.75	3.50	3.88	3.52
Overall Score of Indicator			71%	63%	68%	67%	83%	74%	75%	71%	38%	58%	46%	84%	55%
Statewide Score	42%	52%	62%	72%	76%	75%	88%	78%	78%	72%	62%	67%	70%	82%	72%



Intervention Adequacy

Both the percentage and the average score for Intervention Adequacy declined slightly this year.

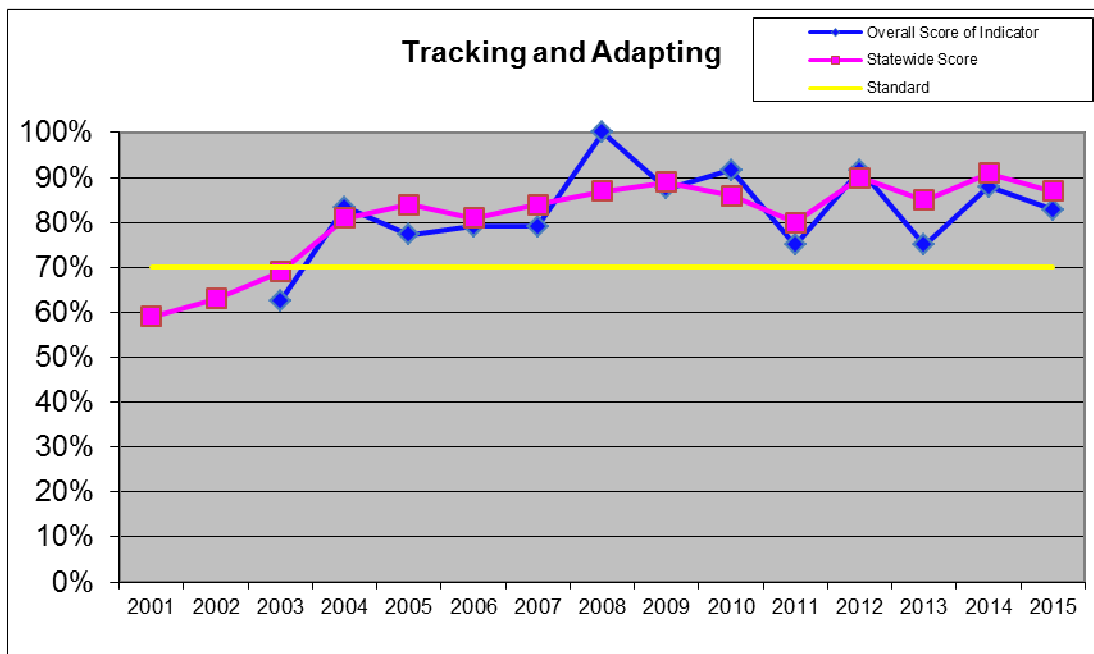
Intervention Adequacy															
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average Score of Indicator			4.13	4.17	4.50	4.25	4.42	4.39	4.33	4.46	4.38	4.17	3.96	4.44	4.24
Overall Score of Indicator			79%	79%	91%	92%	92%	96%	92%	88%	88%	79%	75%	88%	83%
Statewide Score	68%	67%	77%	84%	89%	86%	91%	89%	96%	90%	85%	82%	82%	89%	85%



Tracking and Adaptation

Both the percentage and the average scores for Tracking and Adapting declined slightly this year.

Tracking and Adaptation															
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average Score of Indicator			3.96	4.46	4.36	4.42	4.46	4.74	4.42	4.50	4.17	4.38	4.00	4.60	4.31
Overall Score of Indicator			63%	83%	77%	79%	79%	100%	88%	92%	75%	92%	75%	88%	83%
Statewide Score	59%	63%	69%	81%	84%	81%	84%	87%	89%	86%	80%	90%	85%	91%	87%



V. Summary and Improvement Opportunities

Summary

During the FY2015 Western Region Qualitative Case Review (QCR) numerous strengths were identified about child welfare practice in the Western Region. It is clear that there is significant commitment and hard work devoted to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and families. During the QCR review, a few opportunities for practice improvement were also identified that could improve and enhance the services being provided.

The Region exceeded the 85% standard for Overall Child Status with a score of 90%. All other Child Status indicators also exceeded the Indicator standard (70%) except for Prospects for Permanency at 55%. The score in Prospects for Permanence was the most significant decline in any of the Child and Family Indicators (68% to 55%). Most of the Child Status indicators scored similarly to how they scored last year, but there was a significant increase in Stability (76% to 86%).

After years of above standard Overall System Performance, Western Region scored below standard in FY2011 at 83%, declined in FY2012 to 79%, and then declined again in FY13 to 67%. That trend was reversed in FY14 when Overall System Performance scored 80%. The Overall Performance Score was maintained this year at 79%. For the fifth consecutive year, Long-term View has scored below indicator standard. Child and Family Plan also scored below the indicator standard this year. All other System Indicators declined slightly (1 to 5 points).

Recommendations

Two of the three indicators that fell below standard this year were Long-term View at 59% and Prospects for Permanence at 55%. These two indicators are strongly correlated and improvement on one generally leads to improvement on the other. There were 13 cases that had unacceptable scores on LTV. There were 12 cases that had an unacceptable score on Prospects for Permanence. Of these 12 and 13 cases, nine of the cases had unacceptable score in both Long-term View and Prospects for Permanence. Some of the common barriers in these cases included “doubt” or lack of confidence that the plan to achieve permanency was attainable or sustainable and there was no concurrent permanency plan identified; or there was a lack of a clear understanding of what services or resources would be needed to achieve permanency.

The other indicator that is below standard is Child and Family Plan at 55%. There were 13 cases that were rated unacceptable. The most common contributing factor to the unacceptable rating in these cases was the fact that the written plan was no longer relevant to the family’s needs or situation. In other words, the content of the plan had not been updated although the document had been renewed when the prior plan had expired. Some specific examples include:

- No change to the written plan in over 12 months.
- The plan no longer matches the situation, placement or needs.
- Services were needed but not included on the plan.
- Services were provided but not addressed on the plan.
- Services were completed but continued to be identified on the subsequently renewed plans.

The Western Region Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that addresses Long-term View and Child and Family Plan can be found at: <http://dcfs.utah.gov/reports/> Western Region is not required to address Prospects for Permanence in the regional PIP. This is a statewide concern and therefore efforts to improve the practice pertaining to permanency are being addressed through other broader strategies.